

CONVICTION AND POLITICS IN VIRGINIA SBC

October 6, 1996 (David W. Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, www.wayoflife.org) - In September a group of conservative Southern Baptists in Virginia voted to form their own state convention. The Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia (SBCV) was formed in 1994, but this is the first time it has been able to gather the votes necessary to form the new convention. An identical motion introduced at the SBCV meeting last year failed to pass. This year's meeting, held at the Grove Avenue Baptist Church in Richmond on September 16, was attended by roughly 500 delegates representing 115 churches.

As usual, modernists and their sympathizers, desiring to draw attention away from their heretical approach to Scripture, claimed that the move was made for reasons of politics and power. The founders of the new convention, though, have stated that their motivation is concern for theological purity. The move was made to protest the theological liberalism of the current leadership within the Baptist General Association of Virginia (BGAV), the Virginia branch of the 16-million member Southern Baptist Convention.

The Virginia Baptist General Association had increasingly identified itself with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, which was established in 1991 to provide a forum for Southern Baptists in sympathy with the modernistic side of the convention. In 1990, the BGAV made a decision to allow its churches to withhold contributions to the national Convention to encourage donations to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship.

According to the Associated Baptist Press, September 17, 1996, "Conservatives' ire has also been provoked by the BGAV's vigorous opposition to tuition tax credits and government-sponsored prayer in public schools, and its determined support of two entities--the Baptist Joint Committee and Americans United for the Separation of Church and State--which regularly voice that opposition in Congress. In addition, conservatives charge the BGAV has been too lax in opposing abortion and homosexuality, accusations BGAV leaders strenuously deny."

Outgoing SBCV president Bob Melvin testified: "We are clearly a group of people that really stand unanimously on the Word of God. That's what's brought us together -- our uncompromising stand on the inerrancy and infallibility of the Word of God" (Southern Baptist Press, September 17, 1996).

The thinking of the leadership of the Virginia Baptist Association is represented by this statement by BGAV executive director Reginald McDonough: "Some of us have worked very hard in Virginia to be inclusive and allow the widest possible participation. I would have hoped that we could have modeled an inclusive family that allows for every Virginia Baptist to have a place to stand with integrity. I'm concerned about misleading statements that are being made about stands taken by the General Association" (Associated Baptist Press, Sept. 17, 1996).

This type of thinking is popular with the apostasy of these end times, but it is strictly contrary to the Word of God. The Bible says we are to earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3). There is no room for broadmindedness here. There is one faith, one body of New Testament truth. It was delivered by the holy Apostles almost 2,000 years ago. The church's job is to keep this once-delivered faith and to contend against those who attempt to change it. The

churches have no liberty to modify or ignore any part of the Word of God. Timothy was instructed to allow no man to teach "any other doctrine" than that which he had been given by the Apostle Paul (1 Timothy 1:3). Timothy was not instructed to be inclusive and broadminded. He was to be as narrow as the Word of God. He was charged to keep sound doctrine and to separate from false doctrine (1 Timothy 6:20-21). False teachers are not supposed to be allowed "a place to stand with integrity." They are supposed to be rejected (Titus 3:10-11).

Historically, a theological modernist is one who denies the supernatural element in Scripture. He denies that Adam and Eve were a literal man and woman. He denies that Jonah was swallowed by a whale. He denies or questions or reinterprets the virgin birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He denies that the Bible is the infallible, inerrant Word of God. He often attempts to cloak his modernism by reinterpreting traditional biblical words and doctrines and with his pious terminology. There are modernists within the Southern Baptist Convention.

More dangerous than a modernist, though, is a fence-straddling evangelical. The modernists have been able to take over denominations because of the thousands of cowardly evangelicals who do not take a biblical stand FOR the truth and AGAINST error. The strangest sight in the world is a Christian who says he loves the Lord Jesus Christ and the Gospel of the grace of Christ and the pure Word of God, yet he does not take an unhesitating, public, vigorous stand AGAINST false christs and false gospels and perversions of the Word of God. As one man wisely said, "Good men must do only one thing to allow evil to triumph, and that is to do nothing."

May the Lord deliver us from "do nothing" pastors, who are more afraid of losing their pensions than losing favor with Jesus Christ.

We commend the churches who have taken a stand against the Virginia Baptist Association to form the new convention. It is a half-way step at best, though. The only Scriptural protest against heresy is COMPLETE SEPARATION!

We commend, even more, the churches which stand exclusively upon the Word of God and who therefore reject conventions as man-made devices and who keep their churches independent and who refuse to be yoked together with false teachers. I am privileged to know hundreds of godly men who are willing to give up worldly security and to endure the disfavor of man for the Lord's sake.

HOW DO YOU DISCIPLINE A DENOMINATION? One of the chief problems with associations and denominations is in the area of discipline. How do you keep such an organization theologically and morally pure? The New Testament assembly has been given the authority and criterion pertaining to the discipline of God's people today (Matthew 18:15-18; 1 Corinthians 5). When men create organizations apart from the church, they cannot effectively discipline themselves. That is one of the chief problems in the Southern Baptist Convention. Vigorous attempts have been made to discipline the modernists, but though significant changes have been made in certain areas, these have been ineffectual in rooting modernism, unbelief, and error out of the Convention. The Bible says a little leaven leavens the whole lump (1 Cor. 5:6; Gal. 5:9). Denominationalists do not believe this.

There are many articles on the Southern Baptist Convention in the [O TIMOTHY COMPUTER LIBRARY](#). This 30-megabyte library contains 4,300 pages of the O Timothy magazine from January 1984 to December 1996. Reports are available on many well-known ecumenical leaders and organizations. 4,300 pages of information in 1,700 articles by respected authors; 4,300 hypertext cross links; material is organized by issue; also arranged into 75 topics; powerful search engine; indexed Boolean searches; high tech interface; prints and exports formatted reports; intelligent auto install. This is a commercially-developed Hypertext program. It requires an IBM-compatible computer with Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, color monitor, high density 3.5-inch disk drive, and 30MB of HD space. Special direct order price U.S.\$69.95 + \$4.00 S/H (Suggested retail \$89.95). Way of Life Literature, Bible Baptist Church, 1701 Harns Rd., Oak Harbor, WA 98277. (360) 675-8311.

See ["When Was the Southern Baptist Convention Delivered from Liberalism?"](#) in the Southern Baptist section of the End Times Apostasy Database at the Way of Life Web site -- <http://wayoflife.org/~dcloud>